Contemporary Theorizing about Religion: Religious Economies/Rational Choice

Objective:
1) Introduce the religious economies/rational choice perspective of religion
2) Their associated concepts and measures
3) Compare and contrast with classical and secularization perspectives
4) Familiarize students with online research tools

Activity:
The Rational Choice/Religious Economies perspective has a number of related concepts including Denominationalism, Pluralism, religiosity, religious behavior, religious capital, and more. Secularization’s related concepts include Pluralism, religiosity, and religious behavior as well, in addition to irreligion and unchurched. Compare and contrast the uses of these concepts for Rational Choice and Secularization theorists using the entries in the Religion Dictionary under “Teaching Tools.”

Assessment:
Divide students into two groups with each defending either the Secularization perspective or the Rational Choice/Religious Economies perspective utilizing evidence and data at the international or national levels from The ARDA (National Profiles, Regional Profiles, Compare Nations, and Compare Regions may be particularly useful)

Suggested readings: